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A N

O D E

TO THE

MEMORY

OF THE RIGHT REVEREND

THOMAS WILSON,

LATE

LORD BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN;

BY THE REVEREND

W. TASKER, A. B.

AUTHOR OF THE ODE TO THE WARLIKE GENIUS OF GREAT-BRITAIN, &c.

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MDCCLXXX.

TO

THE REVEREND

THOMAS WILSON, D. D.

PREBENDARY OF WESTMINSTER,

&c. &c.

THIS POEM

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY

INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.

A N

O D E.

I.

NO:---I invoke not thee, AONIAN MAID!
Tho' duly priz'd and exquiſitely fair;
Tho' PHŒBUS' laurel grace thy flowing hair;
Nor call thy virgin ſiſters to my aid.
Above their fabled ſhades, my thoughts aſpire
To where URANIA ſtrikes th' immortal ſtring;
Oh might I but at diſtance hear, and bring,
With feeble voice adapted to my lyre,
Some ſcatter'd notes of her's from that celeſtial choir!

II.

Not War * alone demands my lays,
Nor Heroes, † whom their Country's plaudits raiſe
High in the Temple of Renown:
Each milder Virtue, where it lies
Shunning the glare of day, with piercing eyes
Truth ſees delighted; and inſpires the Muſe,
Diffuſing round ethereal dews,
With freſheſt wreath the Brow of Worth to crown.

III.

Since the bright Star of Goſpel Light,
Shone thro' the cloud of Gothic night,
And with celeſtial radiance deign'd to ſmile
On Britannia's happy iſle;

* Alluding to the Author's Ode to the Warlike Genius of Great-Britain.

† Alluding to the Author's Congratulatory Ode to Admiral Keppel, &c.

Since mitred Prelates, at the ſpotleſs ſhrine
Of true Religion, bow'd the knee,
And pale-ey'd Superſtition fled,
Where did the Mitre's luſtre fairer ſhine,
(Meekneſs attempering dignity)
Than when with rays divine encircling WILSON's head.

IV.

E'en from his earlier years,
Riſing above the groſſer ſpheres,
To human Science' periſhable lore,
He join'd celeſtial Wiſdom's copious ſtore:
Tho' born of high illuſtrious line,
Deſcendent of the ‡ Palatine,
Tho' he drew his antient blood
From the bold undaunted flood
That boil'd in Norman William's fiery breaſt;

‡ The Biſhop was deſcended from Hugh Lupus, Earl Palatine of Cheſter, who was nephew to William the Conqueror.

The

The croſier'd Shepherd, unallied
To the ſtern Conqueror's tyrant pride,
With more refin'd and ſofter nature bleſs'd,
Affliction's drooping ſons careſs'd,
Rais'd up the Children of Deſpair;
Where had pierc'd corroſive Care,
Where Pain and Penury had fix'd their dart,
He o'er the wounds the genial balm beſtow'd,
While forth the milk of human kindneſs flow'd,
An healing ſtream, warm from his inmoſt heart!

V.

While Content my path illumes,
Far hence Ambition ſtretch thy plumes!
Hence Lucre's baſe deſire! he cries:
But thou converſing with the Skies,
In robes of white, unblemiſh'd Faith, appear;
Let Angel Piety be near!

And

And on Monœda's § rugged land
Let Charity complacent ſtand,
Eſſential grace of heavenly birth,
Pattern of Godlike worth on earth,
Her many-colour'd wing unfold,
The ſhivering Pilgrim reſcue from the cold,
Bid hunger feed, and modeſt want be bold!
Oh! teach me thus to imitate the plan
Of DEITY himſelf transform'd to man!

VI.

Nor vain his prayer:—For, from their bright abode,
Cherubic Piety appear'd,
And ſpotleſs-cinctur'd Faith her forehead rear'd,
And lovelieſt Charity before him ſtood:
They came, and on Monœda's ſea-beat ſhore,

§ Ptolemy calls the Iſle of Man Monœda, quaſi Mona Remota, to diſtinguiſh it from Mona, Angleſey.

Want of it's ſting beguil'd,
While pining hunger ‖ ſmil'd,
The Chriſtian Graces throng'd his dome around,
Benevolence her liberal zone unbound,
And open'd wide, to all, his hoſpitable door.

VII.

By Thee, O WILSON, check'd, impell'd, refin'd,
Was form'd young STANLEY's * generous mind;
Thy foſtering hand the noble youth
Conducted, thro' the paths of truth,
To Virtue's towering height,
(Whence beams her radiant light)

‖ The Biſhop appropriated half his income for the uſe of the poor of the Iſle of Man, feeding and cloathing all the poor of the Iſland, though his whole income never exceeded five hundred pounds a year.

* The Rev. Thomas Wilſon, while curate of Winnick, was tutor to Lord Strange, ſon of the Earl of Derby, a very promiſing young Nobleman, who died at Liſbon while on his travels, in the twenty-firſt year of his age.

Tutor'd

Tutor'd by thee, to climb the arduous ſteeps of fame,
His boſom caught the kindred flame;
By thee, with nobleſt ſentiments inſpir'd,
By thee, with patriot emulation fir'd,
With talents that a ſinking ſtate might ſave;
But to it's fatal aim, how true!
Unſeen the mortal arrow flew,
And ſunk the Work of Wiſdom to an early grave.

VIII.

Why fainter glows poetic fire?
Why jars with diſſonance the lyre?
I ſee the bluſh of ſhame ariſe,
Upon the ethereal Muſe's cheek;
From holy Truth's indignant eyes
I ſee the flaſh of anger break.—
Where were ye, powers Angelic! ſay,
Where from your ſacred office did ye ſtray?

When

When Oppreſſion's iron rod †
Dar'd to afflict the—Man of God?
If pure Religion's ſelf muſt feel
The rack of Perſecution's wheel,
If woe and ſufferings be her dower,
Who ſhall eſcape the giant hand of power?

IX.

Or ſay, bright eſſences above!
Is ſuch the hard condition of our birth?

† For his ſtrenuous exertions in favour of Church diſcipline, the Biſhop was fined by an arbitrary Governor, himſelf in 50l. and his two Vicars-General in 20l. each; on refuſing to pay this fine, they were ſent to the Priſon of Caſtle Ruſhin, where they were confined two months, till they appealed to King George the firſt, and his Counſel, by whoſe ſentence they were honourably acquitted.

N. B. A Vicar-General in the Iſle of Man, is an office ſimilar to a Biſhop's Chancellor in England.

The whole of this tranſaction, the author is informed, will be related in his Life, to be prefixed to his Works, now printing by ſubſcription, in two Vols. Quarto.

That

Thus do ye try the Saints on Earth,
Thus with Affliction's touchſtone Virtue prove?
That from her fiery tryal ſhe may brighter ſhine,
Exalting human nature to divine.

X.

So WILSON ſhone.—The miſts of dark diſgrace
Rais'd envious to o'erſhade his face,
Flew, like ſome night-born vapour's floating ſtream,
Before the ſolar warmth, and ſtrong meridian beam.
Mazy, but juſt, are all the ways of Heaven!
Tho' often Merit ſeems to ſhrink aghaſt,
Expos'd to Fate's tempeſtuous blaſt;
Yet on it's head, e'en in this world below,
From Heaven's high King ſuperior bleſſings flow.
To Thee, pure ſubject of my ſong! were given
His choiceſt favours: thine were length of years,
Each joy which ſelf-applauding conſcience bears;

Reflection's golden-imag'd train,
Which baniſh every mental pain,
While in pity to frail man,
By thy example taught, and Precepts ſage,
To Thee was ſtretch'd life's narrow ſpan,
Protracted to a ‡ Patriarch's age.
At placid eve, e'en like the gently ſetting ſun,
Thy finiſh'd courſe of earthly pilgrimage was run;
When like a ripen'd ſheaf of corn,
Mature in heavenly works, thou to thy grave waſt borne;
Deſtin'd completion of thy birth,
Thy mortal part mix'd with its parent earth.----
Tho' dead the Man, no death the Saint ſhall find,
But in the Living Page inſpire mankind:
Celeſtial truth ſhall from his aſhes riſe,
On Jeſſe's ſacred branch aſpiring to the ſkies.

‡ The B ſhop died at the age of ninety-three

The E N D.

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